

Promoting Health Through Happiness & Meaning



OTTER TAIL
COUNTY - MINNESOTA



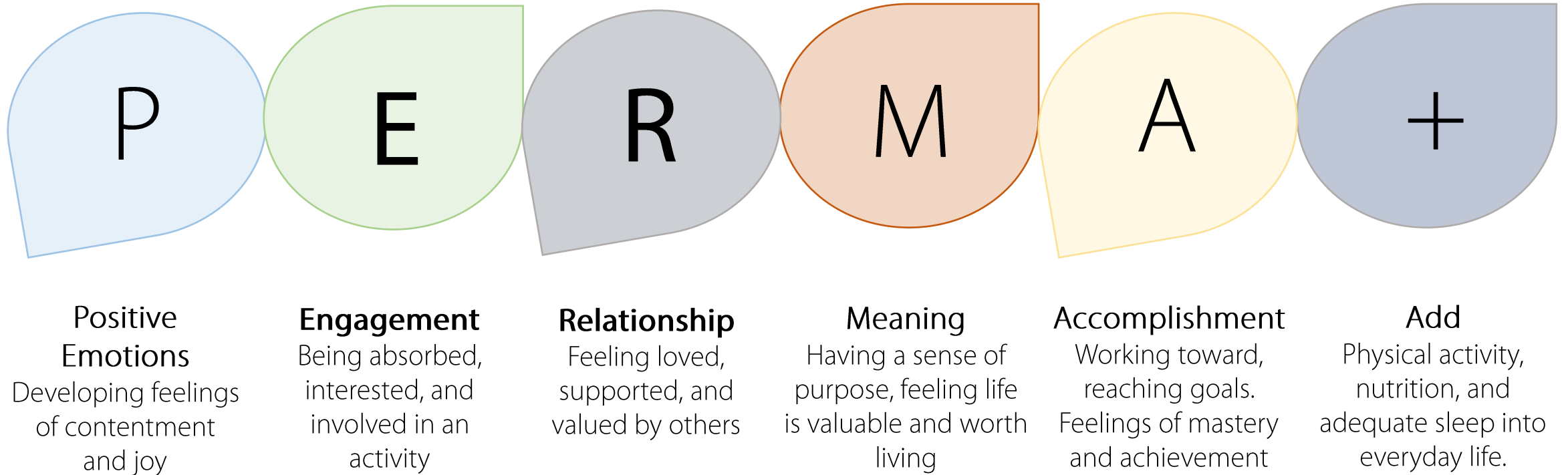
Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Social
Connections



PERMA+ Framework



Social Connections

*The feeling that you belong
to a group and generally feel
close to others.*



Why Social Connections?

We are wired to connect, reach out to, and interact with each other.

Decades of research suggest that the quality of our social ties might be the single biggest predictor of our well-being.

Connection registers in our brain much like physical pleasure.

Benefits of Social Connection

- Increases life span
- Increases self-esteem and empathy
- Improves life satisfaction
- Create positive emotions
- Lowers anxiety and depression
- Provides faster disease recovery



Social Connections

What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness (12 minutes)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KkKuTCFvzI>

Social Connection Practices

Deceptively simple practices for you to try.

Basic
Connection
Practices

Loving-
Kindness
Metta

Braving
Trust

The Gift of
Time

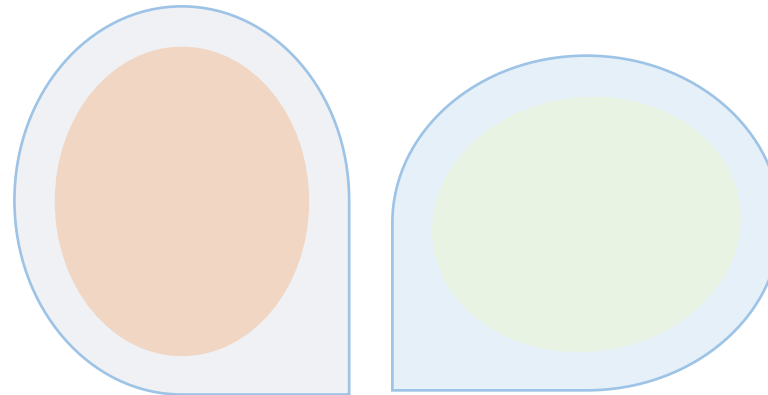
Small Talk
with
Strangers

Active
Listening

Basic Connection Practices

Maintain and reconnect

Maintain your current friendships and reconnect with those you have lost contact with.



Think of those who support you

Write down those who have supported you in the past and now. How did that support make you feel?

Connect with neighbors

Take time to connect with the people you encounter daily.

List your 4am friends

Make a list of the people you could reach out to at any time of the day.

Loving-Kindness (Metta)

In this practice, we cultivate loving-kindness, or Metta. Metta is a Sanskrit word that means love, compassion, friendliness, benevolence, friendship and good will. We all have within us a natural capacity for loving kindness.

Loving-kindness practice is offering ourselves and others wishes for Metta and loving-kindness in our lives. It has been shown to increase feelings of connection and reduce feelings of isolation.

Use 3-5 of these sample phrases and adjust to suit your practice.

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. May I be happy | 2. May I have peace. | 3. May I be safe from all harm. |
| 4. May I be free. | 5. May I live with ease. | 6. May I be filled with health. |

Loving-Kindness (Metta)

Step by Step: How to do a loving-kindness meditation

Step
1

Sit comfortably with your eyes closed and repeat the phrases you chose a few times. Always begin with yourself.

"May I be happy, May I be well, May I be safe, May I have peace."

Step
2

After you have offered yourself loving-kindness, direct it towards someone who you love, or who has helped you.

"May [name] be happy, May [name] be well, May [name] be safe, May [name] have peace."

Continued on the next page...

Loving-Kindness (Metta)

Step

3

Now, picture someone you feel neutral about and offer them loving-kindness.
"May [name] be happy, May [name] be well, May [name] be safe, May [name] have peace."

Step

4

Think of someone who you are struggling with and offer them loving-kindness.
"May [name] be happy, May [name] be well, May [name] be safe, May [name] have peace."

Step

5

Finally, offer every living thing loving-kindness by repeating;
"May all beings everywhere be happy..." and continue with the 3-5 phrases until done.
"May all beings everywhere be happy, May all beings everywhere be well..."

Braving Trust

Highlights

Introduced by Researcher Brené Brown

Trust is the foundation of connection

Trust is not an all or nothing concept- it is something that is **built** in small moments

Examine the BRAVING elements (next page)

Great connections are **made** when we take time to **build trust** with others.

Braving Trust (10 minutes)



Braving Trust

Boundaries:

You respect my boundaries, and when you're not clear about what's okay and not okay, you ask. You're willing to say no.

Reliability:

You do what you say you'll do. Stay aware of your competencies and limitations. Don't overpromise. Be able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.

Accountability:

You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.

Vault:

You don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, and that you're not sharing information about other people that should be confidential.

Integrity:

You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them.

Nonjudgment:

I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgment.

Generosity:

You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others.

Braving Trust Reflection



After reviewing the BRAVING elements, do you consider yourself trustworthy. Where do you struggle with trust?



Do you trust yourself? Is that affecting your ability to connect?



What is one braving trust concept that you can work on to improve your social connections? (with your family, friends, teachers, colleagues, others)

The Gift of Time

1. Think of a person you care about.
2. What could you do for that person that requires nothing more than your time?
3. Plan a gift of time for this person and give it. It could be doing something with them or doing something for them. Don't rush while doing it, focus on the person.
4. If you did something on your own, don't tell them how much time you spent on it. Let the gift speak for itself.



Small talk with strangers

- ✧ We spend a lot of time surrounded by people, we are usually in polite silence and solitude. Striking up a casual conversation can make you both feel happier and more connected.
- ✧ Most people want connection but be sensitive to the wishes of potential conversation partners who do not want to engage.
- ✧ Studies have shown that people are more interested in connecting than we expect them to be. Talking to a stranger can be just as enjoyable as talking with a friend (and the strangers enjoy it, too).
- ✧ Even if you are an introvert, getting a brief boost of social connection can be a positive experience—despite what your intuitions are telling you.



Be a better listener

- ✂ We often listen to others to respond, but good listening is listening to hear what is being said.
- ✂ Capitalize on positive events: Ask about something good that happened that day and listen actively.
- ✂ Make eye contact, smile, make positive comments
- ✂ Listen actively but quietly without interjecting your opinion for a few minutes.



Just connect!

There are many studies that highlight the benefits of strong social connections.

Connections are fun and feel good. Try to bring more connection to your life.

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